



# A Collection in Context: the Production of Handmade Hollow Jewellery

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## Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar una colección de moldes de bronce del siglo XIX (de aproximadamente un millar y medio) que todavía se utiliza en un taller de orfebrería en Gondomar (una ciudad situada cerca de Oporto, Portugal). La colección pertenecía a un taller de Oporto que cerró durante la década de 1970 y corría el riesgo de desaparecer. La compró el taller de Gondomar que comenzó a utilizarla nuevamente desde ese momento. Estos moldes se utilizan en la técnica de estampación, un proceso de realización de un patrón de relieve sobre metal forzando, con un golpe de martillo, un punzón con el patrón deseado de relieve en una lámina de metal sobre el molde correspondiente. Es un proceso manual antiguo y permite hacer varios objetos idénticos al mismo tiempo. Se desarrolló ampliamente en el siglo XIX para hacer joyas en producción masiva. Los moldes de bronce se utilizaron para crear algunas de las tipologías más comunes de joyas portuguesas durante el siglo XIX y la primera mitad del siglo XX, especialmente pendientes y colgantes, concretamente cruces, corazones e imágenes religiosas.

Estas joyas, grandes y vacías, eran utilizadas como objetos de ostentación por parte de los burgueses, campesinos y las esposas de los pescadores, pero también por aristócratas. Hoy en día las llevan las mujeres que participan en fiestas tradicionales. El éxito de estas celebraciones contribuye a la continuidad y promoción de este tipo de joyas. Este estudio pretende reflexionar sobre las formas, tipologías y técnicas de producción utilizando imágenes tomadas en el taller de orfebrería de Gondomar, y también sobre el uso de estas joyas que se representan en retratos individuales y grupales de los siglos XIX y XX.

**Palabras clave:** joyas huecas, colección de moldes de bronce, técnica de estampado, siglo XIX, Fernando Martins Pereira & Ca.

## Resum

L'objectiu d'aquest article és analitzar una col·lecció de motlles de bronze del segle XIX (d'aproximadament un miler i mig) que encara s'utilitza en un taller d'orfebreria a Gondomar (una ciutat situada a prop de Porto, Portugal). La col·lecció pertanyia a un taller de Porto que va tancar durant la dècada de 1970 i corria el risc de desaparèixer. La va comprar el taller de Gondomar que va començar a utilitzar-la novament des d'aquell moment. Aquests motlles s'usen en la tècnica d'estampació, un procés de realització d'un patró de relleu sobre metall forçant, amb un cop de martell, un punxó amb el patró desitjat en relleu en una làmina de metall sobre el corresponent motlle. És un procés manual antic i permet fer uns quants objectes idèntics alhora. Es va desenvolupar molt al segle XIX per fer joies en producció massiva. Els motlles de bronze es van utilitzar per crear algunes de les tipologies més comunes de joies portugueses durant el segle XIX i la primera meitat del segle XX, especialment arracades i penjolls, concretament creus, cors i imatges religioses.

Aquestes joies, grans i buides, eren utilitzades com a objectes d'ostentació per part dels burgesos, camperols i les esposes dels pescadors, però també per aristòcrates. Avui dia les porten les dones que participen en festes tradicionals. L'èxit d'aquestes celebracions contribueix a la continuïtat i promoció d'aquest tipus de joies. Aquest estudi pretén reflexionar sobre les formes, tipologies i tècniques de producció, tot utilitzant imatges preses al taller d'orfebreria de Gondomar, i també sobre l'ús d'aquestes joies que es representen en retrats individuals i grupals dels segles XIX i XX.

**Paraules clau:** joies buides, col·lecció de motlles de bronze, tècnica d'estampat, segle XIX, Fernando Martins Pereira & Ca.

## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse a nineteenth-century collection of bronze moulds (about 1,500) still used in a goldsmith's workshop in Gondomar (a city near Porto in Portugal). The collection belonged to a workshop in Porto that closed in the 1970s and was in danger of disappearing. It was bought by the workshop in Gondomar, which began using it again from then on. These moulds are used in the stamping technique, a process of making a complete relief pattern on metal by hammering a punch with the desired pattern in relief into a metal sheet over a corresponding depressed mould. It is an ancient manual process and with it a number of identical objects can be made at the same time. It was highly developed in the nineteenth century to make mass-produced jewellery. The bronze moulds were used to create some of the most common types of Portuguese jewels during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, especially earrings and pendants, chiefly crosses, hearts and religious images.

These large hollow jewels were used as objects of ostentation by middle-class people, farmers and fishermen's wives, but also by aristocrats. Nowadays they can be seen being worn by women taking part in traditional festivities. The success of these celebrations contributes to the continuity and promotion of this type of jewellery. This study aims to reflect on the forms, types and production techniques, using photographs taken in the goldsmith's workshop in Gondomar, and also on the use of these jewels, which are seen in individual and group portraits made in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**Key words:** hollow jewels, bronze moulds collection, stamping technique, 19th century, Fernando Martins Pereira & Ca.

## Introduction\*

Gold and silver earrings and pendants, obtained by manual stamping, were one of the most frequent typologies in Portuguese jewellery of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. The objective of this study is to present and analyse a collection of bronze moulds (about 1,400 pieces)—dating from the nineteenth century, originating from a goldsmith workshop in the city of Porto—, which is now stored and used in another house in Gondomar [figure 1], one of the largest gold production centres in Portugal since the nineteenth century. These rare bronze moulds, because of the nature of the metal of which they are made, constitute the essential support for the stamping technique, an ancient manual process that allows the simultaneous production of several identical objects in a relatively brief period. The documents of that time, such as dowry books, wills, and asset inventories, alongside the emerging individual or group portrait photographs, and the study of pieces belonging to public and private collections, have provided us with a rich variety of formal pieces obtained from this process, and helped us to understand the formal organisation of such pieces, as well as the function of many of the moulds belonging to that collection.



**Figure 1**  
The collection of bronze moulds, 19th century.  
Fernando Martins Pereira  
& Ca., S. Cosme  
(Gondomar).

## The history of the bronze moulds collection

The collection dates to the nineteenth century and originated in the workshop founded by José Coelho Ribeiro, a native of São Miguel de Baltar, Paredes council, who was born on 17 January 1841<sup>1</sup>. The history of his childhood is unknown, but at an early age he moved to the city of Porto to learn the craft of goldsmith. In the register of his first marriage to Maria Marques de Jesus, on 20 January 1866, he is named as a goldsmith and resident at Rua do Bonfim, where he certainly learned the craft<sup>2</sup>. After the death of his first wife, in October of 1869<sup>3</sup>, he married her sister, Rosa Marques de Jesus Coelho, in May of the following year<sup>4</sup>. He continued to live in Rua do Bonfim, as evidenced by the registers of his children's baptisms<sup>5</sup>, and established his own workshop there in 1871, according to the publicity information for his establishment<sup>6</sup>. His sons, José and António, learned their father's profession. However, the untimely death of José, when he was barely eighteen years old<sup>7</sup>, made António the sole heir

at the head of the workshop. In 1913, he became part of the company referred to as 'gold and silver' —José Coelho Ribeiro & Filho<sup>8</sup> ['and son']—and, after his father's death in 1915, the workshop was renamed António Coelho Ribeiro<sup>9</sup>. The company name remained changed until 1960, when it was renamed A. Coelho Ribeiro & Filhos Ltd<sup>10</sup>.

In the mid 1970s, the approximately 1,400 moulds were sold to the workshop of Fernando Martins Pereira & Ca., based in S. Cosme (Gondomar)<sup>11</sup>, a city located about five kilometres from Porto. The collection was at risk of being lost because the owners' intention was to sell the pieces to a scrap metal dealer, who would have sent them to a foundry. The awareness of the rarity and quality of these objects led the present owners to acquire them and to reuse them. Since that date, the collection has been enriched with other moulds offered by workshops that were closing and that thus sought to ensure the continuity of its use. Dedicated to the maintenance of traditional techniques and forms, the Fernando Martins Pereira workshop has thus maintained the execution of 'hollow and baroque' pieces from the centennial collection of bronze moulds<sup>12</sup>.

### **The production of hollow jewels and the metal stamping technique**

The permanence of the collection of bronze moulds in the workshop of Fernando Martins Pereira and the willingness to reuse them has allowed the manual process of metal stamping in this workshop to remain until the present day<sup>13</sup>. This technique consists of obtaining a relief from a mould by pressing, with successive blows of a hammer, a metal plate. Certainly, of Mediterranean origin and introduced by the Phoenicians in the Iberian Peninsula, it was widespread in the jewellery of the Greek World. From the sixteenth century onwards, it began to be well known, and in the nineteenth century it became a process of mass production<sup>14</sup>, the manual method coexisting alongside a mechanical process involving a press, a stamping machine that provided more pieces in a relatively brief period.

The production of hollow pieces starts by obtaining very thin metal sheets<sup>15</sup>. Gold, silver, and copper, the metals that make up the alloy, are weighed, inserted into the melting pot, cast and poured into a sheet metal from which a solid bar is obtained for sheeting. This operation is carried out in a metal sheet mill, and the bar is passed successively between two cylinders which rotate in opposite directions and stretch the metal, thereby reducing the thickness of the metal sheet to the desired thickness. This is then cut into the desired sizes with snips and stamped. The manual stamping is done on an anvil fixed to a wooden block, and the metal sheets are overlaid (starting with several sheets to increase the resistance and prevent the plate from breaking) and placed between a lead plate and the inverted stamp, that is, with the relief facing downwards. The stamp is repeatedly hammered with a stamping hammer until the plate is moulded to the relief part of the stamp, and the negative side is marked on the lead plate. It is a very rudimentary and artisanal process, which is quite physically demanding, but it provides similar reliefs in a relatively brief period. This operation is repeatedly intercalated by annealing, a technique which consists of heating the metal until it is red hot with a blowtorch (after which it is allowed to cool slowly), avoiding breakages in the metal sheet caused by the hardening of the metal during the stamping and consequently making it more malleable. Darkened by annealing, the parts thus obtained are 'bleached', that is, immersed in a water

and sulphuric acid bath, thus regaining the colour and natural brightness of the alloy. This results in one of the halves of the hollow pieces, and it is necessary later to remove the excess metal with a saw, a manual operation which is slow and delicate, and that needs to be carried out sheet after sheet. The soldering phase follows; it is one of the most important parts of the the process, and it guarantees the joining of the two halves and the obtaining of the hollow pieces. The goldsmith reinforces the edges of the metal with solder, an alloy composed of gold, silver, and copper, to which cadmium—a metal which has a lower melting point—is added, thus allowing for a reduction in the alloy's melting temperature. The two halves are joined and wrapped with an iron wire; the piece is placed on a soldering wig and soldered with the careful projection of flame from a mouth blowtorch. The iron wire is then withdrawn, the piece again bleached, and the joining line filled, creating a uniform surface and rendering the junction line practically imperceptible. Some pieces can still be coloured through the application of glazes and patina, a dark pigment that provides a contrast between the darker bottoms and the lighter and brighter surfaces and all are coloured and burnished, regaining the traditional metal colour and lustre. The resulting singular and hollow pieces have an appropriate size and weight, which allowed them to become privileged objects of ostentation.

### **The collection of moulds and hollow jewels: typologies and sources for their study**

Stamped pieces are among the most common typologies used in Portugal during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, especially earrings and chest pendants, namely crosses, hearts, and religious images. The stamping technique allowed the production of large pieces, used as objects of ostentation by all social groups, from farmers, to fishermen, but also members of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, a fact that can be seen through the study of contemporary photography, namely the 'carte de visite', which made the use of photography more popular and democratic<sup>16</sup>. The portraits constitute a privileged iconographic source for the study of jewellery, insofar as they reflect selected and socially standardised moments for the display of personal or family pieces. Such photographs were meant to be circulated and shared by family and friends, and were seen as privileged means of presence and memory. In this sense, the ostentation of gold objects constituted a defining element of the social status of those photographed, contributing to the context of the individual in the social or cultural group to which they belonged, integrating photography, symbols, and codes that form bonds of cohesion and fortune of the group itself.

The interpretation of these portraits is confirmed by the records of the time, which attest to the taste for gold shown by the women of the north of Portugal, true 'curious exhibitions' of goldsmiths and chests, such as starry skies, referred to by D. António da Costa<sup>17</sup>. Among the substantial number of pieces used, sometimes of large proportions, the author highlights the 'earrings that reach the shoulders', hanging in two, three or even four pairs from the ears, the 'hearts of wrought gold exceeding one hand', and 'enormous crucifixes, enormous Virgins of the Conception'<sup>18</sup>. National authors and foreign visitors who roamed through Portugal at the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, refer to this widespread taste for the use of gold, at work or during holidays, the fruit of work and the resulting savings<sup>19</sup>. Avintes bakers, Maia farmer women, and 'satellite boroughs', or family members of fishermen, which were 'itinerant reliquaries', according to Maria Rattazzi, are



included in this reported or photographed world of the nineteenth century, and are essential sources for the study of the so-called hollow and baroque pieces. However, the use of traditional costumes was also a fashion in north-west Portugal, at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The observation of a photograph of women dressed in a Minho costume, for example, may not necessarily reflect a peasant social reality, but rather express the will of such people to portray themselves with the aforementioned popular costume, reflecting a bucolic paradigm in the taste of the literate groups of 'fin de siècle' Portuguese society. This applies to the group portrait of the daughters of the Republican and twice President of the Republic, Bernardino Machado, at the Carnival of 1914, where they appear wearing the traditional Minho costume. In these cases, it is important to focus on the typology of the selected pieces rather than the social and economic interpretation of the elements that are represented<sup>20</sup>.

## **Ear adornments**

The preference for earrings and their widespread use explains the wide variety of moulds and their typologies in this category; 'the earrings are, among all the adornments, those of an invincible preference,' as the Portuguese ethnologist Rocha Peixoto observed in 1908<sup>21</sup>.

### **Metal stamped hoop earrings**

The collection includes a great quantity of types of hoop earrings, of different sizes, in many cases identified by a number<sup>22</sup>. Some of the stamps bear the initial R in their centre, which alluded to the name Ribeiro, the surname of the former owners of the collection. In the set of printed pieces, there are sober models, following a smooth circular or lunar composition, with a flat, quadrangular, or plump profile, focusing on the decorative motifs in the lower and more visible zone of the piece: these are of a geometric or vegetal nature, namely branches, tendrils, palm trees, flowers, bunches of grapes and, more rarely, small birds, hearts, a globe with a cross, and are arranged symmetrically [figure 2a]. The comparison of these typologies and decorative motifs with existing pieces in public, private collections, and contemporary photographs show the representativeness of this collection in relation to the stamped rings produced in Portugal during this period, regardless of the workshop in which they were made. The Museum of Popular Art of Lisbon preserves a curious set of thirty-six pairs of stamped rings, created for the Ethnography section of the *Portuguese World Exhibition* of 1940, and made in the workshop of José Lopes da Silva, in Gondomar<sup>23</sup>. The exhibition importance they had in this remarkable Portuguese ephemeris, whose programmatic options were deeply marked by nationalist and identity values, reflects the popularity of this type of jewellery and its association with a popular and ethnographic context in Portugal in the early 1940s. It also attest to the specialisation of workshops in the production of these types of pieces, concentrated in the city of Porto and neighbouring councils, such as Gondomar and Vila Nova de Gaia. As for the demand, and from what we can observe through the portraits dating from the end of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, their use was generalised from the north to south of Portugal, with abundant iconographic records in the north-west of the territory, particularly in the fishing communities of Póvoa de Varzim and rural communities in the neighbouring municipalities of Viana do Castelo and Porto.



**Figure 2a and 2b**

Hoop earring mould to the left and a Baroque, stamped or “Minhota” earring mould to the right from the nineteenth-century. Fernando Martins Pereira & Ca., S. Cosme (Gondomar).

### **Baroque, stamped, or ‘Minhotas’ earrings**

These pieces, also of several sizes, are among the most numerous. Structurally they have slightly different shapes that vary between discoid, oval, or angular, and are topped by two U-shaped rods with a superimposed sphere, from where the suspension ring starts. They are also distinguished by the profusion of decorative elements that cover their surfaces, a kind of ‘horror of emptiness’ that justifies the designation given by the workshop, as baroque or ‘Minhotas’. The decoration is symmetrical and arranged in a kind of mirror, almost invariably starting from two central motifs with a clear and natural shape—the acorn and the bunch of grapes. The vegetal motifs are predominant and diverse, namely tendrils, contorted branches, leaves of multiple shapes, buds, chalices, cornucopias, and fruits of berries or in a pine shape; these are associated with an enormous variety of motifs taken from everyday life, from the world of work, or from a deep symbolic universe: birds, shields, bows, fluttering ribbons, vases and jars with flowers, axes, scythes, baskets, crowns, hands, hearts isolated or pierced by arrows, chalices, earth globes and crosses, reflecting a complex and intricate process of artistic orientation [figures 2a and 2b].

Ostentatious because of their size and decoration, but relatively light due to the nature of the technique, these pieces were much sought after by the peasants of the Douro Litoral, as can be seen in the illustrated postcard ‘Costumes of Northern Portugal’ (Avintes), and can still be seen in the processions of Viana do Castelo, although residually, according to Rosa Mota<sup>24</sup>.



## Long, hollow, and baroque earrings

The designation of these earrings is directly related to their formal appearance, usually composed of two parts, a smaller one attached to the suspension ring and a long one, attached to it through a small ring that improves the piece's articulation. Because of their size and decoration, they are pieces that represent status and ostentation, and are preferably used on festive days or occasions (including portraits) in which it was necessary to dignify the family wealth and name. Since each earring requires the use of at least two stamps, the abundance of these moulds in the collection (more than three hundred) is understandable, with lengths measuring between one and ten centimetres. The decorative motifs employed are resemble those of the 'Minhotas,' reflecting the same 'horror of emptiness,' but adding a wider range of forms. The acorn (more abundant) and the bunches of grapes also start in the lower part, differentiating types and constituting the starting point for a rich universe of vegetation, composed of branches, flowers, and varied fruits that involves a vast network of figurative symbols which are intertwined: anchors, ropes, daggers and swords, crossed axes, shields, hearts, arrows, vases, jars and baskets with flowers, jugs, cornucopias, ribbons, keys, hearts, crowns, hands, crosses and crucifixes, chalices, birds, snakes, shells, arms of Portugal, scythes, and rakes in a clear allusion to agricultural works [figures 3a, b, and c].

Based on information found in nineteenth-century documentation, and on the pieces in public and private collections, as well as on the observation of drawings and contemporary photographs, we can say that this typology started in the eighteenth century, was very popular in the following century, and survived in the festive processions of the Alto Minho, in the folklore of the region, and in the treasures of the Ouradas Ladies of the north of Portugal. And while the portraits and illustrated postcards attest to their use by the women of Porto and surrounding councils (Avintes, Maia, Famalicão, etc.) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the same iconographic source illustrates their use in the centre and inland of the country in the middle of the twentieth century: this is the case of the portraits of the young women from



**Figure 3a, 3b and 3c**  
To the left long, hollow and baroque earrings moulds from the nineteenth-century. Fernando Martins Pereira & Ca., S. Cosme (Gondomar). To the right, long, hollow and baroque earrings, c. 1938. Museu de Arte Popular, Lisboa.

Vila Chã, Cantanhede, and Castelo Branco in the photographic collection 'Foto Beleza'. The large size of these earrings—which are relatively light due to their hollowness, but extremely appealing because of the decoration's enriched baroque style in the enamelled pieces (with predominant white, blue, green, and red)—explains the popularity of these pieces and their demand and use for more than two centuries, although in different social and cultural contexts.

### **Stamped, cast, and moulded earrings**

A significant part of these pieces concerns complex structures requiring the use of two or more stamps. An extended number of patterns is intended for the circumscription of the frame of the piece, defining contours in a variety of shapes: anchor, pyriform, diamond, oval, triangular, enriched by spheres, pearls, twists, twirls, diamond tips, shields, tendrils, trefoils and flowers, and shells, respecting the richness of the decorative universe that distinguishes the nature of these hollow pieces. To this 'cast' support a stamped and profusely decorated metal sheet is superimposed, whose shapes adjust to the structure on which it fits. Vegetal motifs are predominant, repeating those already referred to for the 'Minhotas' and the 'long ones', exhibiting a symmetrical or asymmetrical composition, with a firm and delicate design, prepared in many points for the reception of enamel: branches, leaves, flowers, and various fruits surround the figurative elements that depict, in this case, forms of nature, such as baskets, vases, cornucopias, axes, arrows, birds resting on foliage, hands that hold branches, and hearts that are confused with leaves. In many types, the frame is dispensed with, and only a double or single sheet is used, enclosed by a sheet of smooth metal on the back. These earrings, which were also large and very elaborate, were used from the north to south of the territory, from the fishing communities of Póvoa do Varzim to the 'milk sellers' of Lisbon, and are still present in the traditional festivities of the north of the territory.

### **Chest pendants**

Rocha Peixoto wrote that 'after earrings some people turn to the adornment of the chest and neck'<sup>25</sup>, and Luís Chaves stated that 'the main value of the artistic and economic objective of pieces of goldsmithing is found on the chest', dividing them into three main categories: those of 'religious sense' such as medals and crosses; those used for 'magic or fantasy', that is, the crossed fingers amulets where the fingers occupy a privileged place; others relating to 'love or personal circumstance', such as the heart and medals with portraits 'and other intimate relics'<sup>26</sup>.

The heart, a 'symbol of love', and the cross, a 'symbol of faith', constitute the 'most preferred popular themes,' as stated by Rocha Peixoto. In fact, an analysis of inventories, dowry books, wills, and valuations of assets<sup>27</sup> shows that hearts and crosses are the pendants most commonly associated with the chains, the main piece that adorned the female chest<sup>28</sup>, followed by Our Ladies of Conception. This information confirms the demand for these pieces and extends their use not only to a 'popular' context, but to Portuguese society as a whole, also demonstrating the economic value associated with them. These pendants could be obtained from different techniques such as filigree, casting, and stamping, the process which is the focus of this text, although in almost all cases the sources provide scant information in relation to this question.

Their luxurious and decorative appearance once again attest to the great demand for these pieces, evident in the quantity, diversity of sizes (they can vary between three and twelve centimetres in height), and motifs for the stamps in the collection under analysis.

The stamped, hollow, and baroque hearts are composed of two parts: the cordiform and the upper one, corresponding to the stylisation of the flaming element, inherited from the heart in flames from the Baroque period. As for the distribution of the decoration we can also distinguish two typologies: the hearts whose entire surface is covered with decorative elements and those that are constituted of a smooth cordiform memorial panel in the central zone, surrounded by an ornamental frieze [figures 4a, and 4b]. However, a hollow and inflated heart may join two different stamps, with different faces. Technically, the two parts can be completely soldered, forming the hollow piece, or joined through a hinge, that allows the opening and closing of the heart like a reliquary. The same piece would serve, therefore, to store small mementoes, such as photographs, hair, pieces of fabric, and so on, as evident in the gold piece belonging to the collection of the Marta Ortigão Sampaio House Museum, Porto [figure 4c]. The cross, with or without the presence of the Redeemer, is one of the most widespread motifs, a symbol of the Passion and Death of Christ and, consequently, the image of Salvation, which justifies the great profusion of forms and techniques employed in its production. The



**Figure 4a, 4b and 4c**  
To the left hollow and baroque hearts moulds from the ninetieth-century. Fernando Martins Pereira & Ca., S. Cosme (Gondomar). To the right, gold hollow and baroque heart. Casa-Museu Marta Ortigão Sampaio, Porto.



**Figure 5**  
Crosses moulds from the ninetieth-century. Fernando Martins Pereira & Ca., S. Cosme (Gondomar).

decorative language repeats the same style already observed for the earrings, with themes of vegetal origin predominating, associated with some figurative elements, such as hands and cups [figure 5]. The use of these pieces was generalised between the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, in the Viana do Castelo and Douro regions, although it can also be seen in portraits from central and southern Portugal.

The 'Lady of the Conception', also known as 'Virgin of the Conception', 'Lady of the Caneco' or simply 'Conception', is also among the most common types of pendants between the middle of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Its popularity can be explained by the affirmation of the cult to Our Lady of the Conception in Portugal from 1646 but also from the declaration of the Dogma of the Immaculate by Pope Pius IX in 1854<sup>29</sup>, which put an end to a theological controversy that lasted several centuries. The moulds shown in the collection follow the stylisation of an iconographic model developed since the seventeenth century and adapted to the nature of the materials, techniques, and satisfaction of an ever-increasing demand: Mary is represented standing with her hands clasped in prayer, and her body is resting on clouds from which emerge small heads of cherubs and flowers with a crescent only suggested or highly stylised. The iconographic sources of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries corroborate the vast number of references to these pieces detected in the documents, as exemplified by the drawing 'Mulher de Avintes' by the renowned Portuguese painter Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro (1880) and the portrait of the family Avelar do Ferradal, from Santa Maria da Feira, dating from 1900.

Among the amulets, the crossed fingers are the most abundant in the collection, although this also includes anchors, keys, a crescent, a fish, and a pair of scissors. The crossed fingers amulet is an object in the form of a closed hand and the thumb between the middle fingers was the most popular among the amulets, and its origin was deeply rooted in Mediterranean traditions. It was believed to be particularly effective against 'spells, bewitchment, and the evil eye,' warding off evil and protecting its bearer. Hollow pieces, with two sides, as can be seen in their stamps, could be made of gold or silver, jet, amber, coral, or be gold-plated, and those of iron, bone, ivory, clay, and porcelain, among other materials, were also much sought after. The pendants combined the virtues of the raw material with those of the gesture, thus reinforcing its talismanic function.

### **The pieces stamped today and resistance to the future**

The proliferation of religious festivals and pilgrimages in Portugal, particularly in the Minho and Douro littoral regions, encourages the use of traditional costumes and with them the gold pieces. The success of these festivities and their growing demand with domestic and foreign visitors contribute, in Rosa Mota's opinion, to the dissemination and continuity of the use of 'popular gold', boosting the purchase of these pieces by active and passive participants in the event<sup>30</sup>. And even though the baroque pieces have a minor presence in the Viana do Castelo parades<sup>31</sup>, it is also true that the baroque earrings, stamped rings, long earrings, and pendants analysed can still be seen on the ears, necks, and chests of the women who participate or visit these festivities.

But these ornaments are also included among the treasures of the sacred images, especially of the Marianas, on which are exhibited a small number of daily ‘personal pieces’ or they are worn at their festivities, when they are taken out to the streets and ‘adorned with gold ornaments offered by the faithful’<sup>32</sup>. The 2010 poster photograph of the Festivals of Our Lady of Light, from Constantim (Vila Real), exemplifies this practice and shows us an image of Our Lady with a chest piece, from which two crosses and two stamped hearts hang; on the ears, there are two large, ‘long, hollow, and baroque’ earrings<sup>33</sup>. These traditions demonstrate the survival of tastes, forms, and techniques fuelled by religious fervour and the pride of the community in showing the wealth of their ‘Ladies’.

We are thus faced with techniques and typologies that have resisted the passage of time, changing tastes and fashions, and have been able to adapt to new contexts, marking their presence in the treasures of Our Lady, at festivals and pilgrimages, attracting the attention of visitors and national and international tourists, and, thus, surpassing Portuguese borders. This collection of bronze moulds has survived several generations of goldsmiths and two workshop spaces, and has resisted the appeal of the melting pot. The present owners have demonstrated tenacity and determination in working these pieces, preserving this extraordinary collection of objects and maintaining a process of artisan production that has been lost over time [figure 6].



**Figure 6**  
“Conception” hollow pendants (contemporary production). Fernando Martins Pereira & Ca., S. Cosme (Gondomar).



## FOOTNOTES

\*Translation by Jorge Almeida e Pinho and Mark Poole

1. Son of José Coelho Ribeiro and Maria da Costa, born in the place of Ribeiro in the parish of Baltar. He was baptised on the nineteenth day of the same month, having as siblings of baptism his brother António Ribeiro and his sister Angelina. Porto, Arquivo Distrital, Register of Baptisms, Baltar-Paredes, 1837–1849, f. 36v, 17/1/1841, retrieved from <http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/viewer?id=486444>, [query: 14/07/2017].
2. Porto, Arquivo Distrital, Marriage Registers, Bonfim Parish, 1866, no. 9, retrieved from <http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/viewer?id=4885871870> [query: 15/07/2017].
3. Porto, Arquivo Distrital, Death Registers, Bonfim Parish, 1869, no. 219, retrieved from <http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/viewer?id=829388> [query: 15/07/2017].
4. Porto, Arquivo Distrital, Marriage registers, Bonfim Parish, 1870, no. 24, retrieved from <http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/viewer?id=829355> [query: 15/07/2017].
5. The first concerning Maria, first daughter of the couple, born on 22 February 1871, the second of José, who was born on August 11, 1872 and António, born on 31 December 1873. Porto, Arquivo Distrital, Bonfim Parish, Baptism Registers, no. 102, retrieved from <http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/viewer?id=829323> [query: 14/07/2017]; Bonfim Parish, Baptism Registers, No. 300, retrieved from <http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/viewer?id=829324> [query: 14/07/2017] and Bonfim Parish, Baptism Registers, no. 3, retrieved from <http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/viewer?id=829326> [query: 14/07/2017], respectively.
6. First at number 222, in the following year in number 378, between 1877 and 1879 the workshop is indicated in Rua do Bonjardim, in Porto, no. 380, and in 1881 it appears again in Rua do Bonfim, no. 378. Between 1884 and 1974 worked in no. 305-B Rua do Bonfim. SOUSA, J. L. *Almanak do Porto e seu Distrito para o Anno de 1871*. Porto: Imprensa Popular de J. L. de Sousa, 1870, and following with indicated dates.
7. José Coelho Ribeiro Júnior, died on 29 July 1890, at no. 305 Rua do Bonfim, place of residence and family workshop. Porto, Arquivo Distrital, Bonfim Parish, Death Registers, No. 414, retrieved from <http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/viewer?id=829411> [query: 14/07/2017].
8. BARROS, A. de (dir.). *Anuário do Commercio do Porto e seu Distrito*. Porto: Manuel Pinto de Sousa Lelo, 1913, p. 273.
9. BARROS, A. de (dir.). *Anuário do Commercio do Porto e seu Distrito*. Porto: Manuel Pinto de Sousa Lelo, 1916, p. 287.
10. VISEU JÚNIOR, I. dos S. (dir.). *Anuário do Pôrto Santos Viseu (Comercial, Industrial e Burocrático) para a cidade do Pôrto, Gaia, Matosinhos e restantes concelhos do Distrito*. Porto: António dos Santos Guimarães, 1945, p. 468.
11. This workshop was founded in 1914 by José Martins Pereira, according to information from the current owners and as it appears in the authorisation document of ‘drawing for puncture’ approved by the ‘Casa da Moeda e Papel Sellado’. See also the documentary by Carlos Viana, available at <http://lugardoreal.com/video/fabrico-do-coraco-barroco> [query: 28/07/2017].
12. A special thanks to Mr David, and to Rosário and Pedro for the support they have always given and continue to give to our investigation.
13. SOUSA, A. C. *Ourivesaria estampada e lavrada. Uma técnica milenar numa oficina de Gondomar*. Porto: Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 1997.
14. NEWMAN, H. *An Illustrated Dictionary of Jewelry*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1994, p. 289. ISBN 978-0500274521.
15. Traditionally made in gold, the workshop currently produces these pieces mostly in silver, given the high cost of gold and the consequent difficulty of putting these products on the market. About the detailed



- process of producing these pieces see: SOUSA, A. C. *Cit. Supra*; SOUSA, A. C. *Metamorfoses do ouro e da prata. A ourivesaria tradicional no noroeste de Portugal*. Porto: Centro Regional de Artes Tradicionais, 2000, pp. 28–30. ISBN 972-9419-39-6.
16. PINHEIRO, N. Fortuna própria, malogro alheio. Representação fotográfica. In *XXXII Encontro da Associação Portuguesa de História Económica e Social. A construção da fortuna e do malogro; perspectivas históricas*. Lisboa: ISCTE, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, 2012, p. 1 [query: 19/07/2017]. Available at [http://aphes32.cehc.iscte-iul.pt/docs/s24\\_4\\_pap.pdf](http://aphes32.cehc.iscte-iul.pt/docs/s24_4_pap.pdf).
  17. COSTA, A. (dir.). *No Minho*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1874, p. 258 [query: 19/07/2017]. Retrieved from <https://ia800301.us.archive.org/29/items/nominho00costuoft/nominho00costuoft.pdf>.
  18. *Ibid.*, pp. 258–259.
  19. On this topic and the register of authors who described these scenarios consult the doctoral thesis of MOTA, R. *O uso do ouro popular no Norte de Portugal no século XX*. Porto: Universidade Católica Portuguesa. Escola das Artes, 2014, Vol. I, pp. 338–354.
  20. In *Ilustração Portuguesa*. 1917, II Series, no. 420, p. 314 [query: 03/09/2017]. Retrieved from [http://hemerotecadigital.cm-lisboa.pt/OBRAS/IlustracaoPort/1914/N420/N420\\_master/N420.pdf](http://hemerotecadigital.cm-lisboa.pt/OBRAS/IlustracaoPort/1914/N420/N420_master/N420.pdf).
  21. ROCHA PEIXOTO, A. As filigranas. In *Portugalia*. 1908, tomo II, fasc. 1–4, p. 553.
  22. A scale that in some of the typologies ranges from number 1 to 18. Some typologies have several flaws, attesting to the loss of stamps from the initial set.
  23. SOUSA, A. C. *Ourivesaria estampada e lavrada...* *Cit. supra*, pp. 78–79.
  24. MOTA, R. *Cit. supra*, Vol. II, p. 127.
  25. ROCHA PEIXOTO, A. *Cit. supra*, p. 555.
  26. CHAVES, L. *As filigranas*. Lisbon: SPN, 1941, p. 12.
  27. On the evaluated assets, see VASCONCELOS E SOUSA, G. *Tesouros privados. A Joalharia na Região do Porto (1865-1879)*. Porto: Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2012. ISBN 978-989-8366-32-0. This work studies and publishes the almost 2,900 certificates of evaluation of several jewellery and silverware pieces, issued between 1865 and 1879 by the Contrastaria do Porto and subsequently entrusted to Vicente Manuel de Moura and that today are in the Archive of the Casa da Moeda in Lisbon, *Papéis de Vicente Manuel de Moura*, Los. 1–4. Among the 2,900 certificates evaluated between 1865 and 1879, the chain with a heart is registered about 850 times, against about 200 with crucifix or cross and 80 with a ‘Conception’, demonstrating the preference for these pieces in Porto and surrounding councils during this period. This taste persisted over the following decades.
  28. The chain refers to a long golden thread joined by a ring (between 2 and 2.40 m), formed by links traditionally united by the ‘pushers’. It was folded in several rounds of the neck (up to four), and it was the one more listed in the documentation of the Douro Litoral, implying that its acquisition was an important economic investment. It was used by all social groups, bringing great social and material prestige, enhanced by the pieces that were suspended from it.
  29. Concerning this theme, see SOUSA, A. C. The image of the *Immaculata* as Patroness of Portugal and a motif in traditional jewellery pendants. In *Ikon. Journal of Iconographic Studies*. Rijeka: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, 2017, Vol. 10, pp. 275–288. Print ISSN 1846-8551 / Online ISSN 2507-041X.
  30. MOTA, R. *Cit. supra*, Vol. I, p. 357.
  31. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 127.
  32. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 252. See text from the author, Vol. I, pp. 250–268.
  33. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 146.